

City of North Saint Paul
September 8, 2021
Approved City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

North St. Paul City Hall – Council Chambers
2400 Margaret Street

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Furlong called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Thorsen
Council Member Petersen
Council Member Cole
Council Member Wong
Mayor Furlong

Staff: Interim City Manager Brian Frandle, Deputy Clerk Jennie Kloos, Finance Director Dan Winek, Communications Kari Erpenbach,

III. ADOPT AGENDA

On motion by Council Member Thorsen, seconded by Council Member Cole, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the agenda as presented.

IV. TOPIC(S)

A. 2022 Budget

Interim City Manager Frandle stated this meeting is a continuation from the city council workshop meeting on September 7th.

Finance Manager Dan Winek gave an overview on discussions from the previous evening workshop stating that the preliminary levy increase is currently at 4.7% over 2021. Preliminary tax levies within Ramsey County are averaging 5.87% - 6.44%, which currently brings us under the average. Items not discussed or added to the current budget are categorized by direct levy impact and indirect levy impact. Direct levy meaning an item that will be occurring again in the future and indirect more of a one-time cost item. Items affecting the direct levy include COLA, Fire & Code Enforcement part-time wages, increase Mayor and Council members pay and adding a Police Sergeant. More one-time costs would include a police records management system, replacing police squad computers and police handheld radios. It was suggested to consider using the remaining CARES funding to purchase the police records management system. Discussion was also held on adding funds to the Recreation Fund for the Arts and Culture Commission.

Council Member Thorsen stated it might be a little early to add additional positions to the Police Department with the type of impact it would have to the budget and when still short staffed with police officers and CSO's. Mr. Thorsen would prefer to see a full staff of police officers/CSO's and wait until the new City Manager was on board before making that decision.

He would not support and increase to the council/ mayor salary and will also be waiving his council stipend for 2022. Discussion was held on the Fire & Code Enforcement and would suggest having a workshop with the Fire Department to discuss further.

Council Member Petersen would support an increase to council / mayor stipend increase, being it's been a while since an increase has occurred and time is valuable.

Council Member Wong suggested a workshop to discuss personnel. She questioned if there was an opportunity to bundle radios for the fire department with the police to receive a discount. And would also be in favor for adding "seed money" to the Arts and Culture Commission.

Council Member Cole inquired on the COLA increase and how it would differ from union negotiations. Finance Director Winek stated that in communications with other cities in Ramsey County, we are .5% below where others are and according to publications, social security is looking at an increase for COLA. Mr. Cole also commented on starting a budget for the Arts and Culture Commission and the EDA's request for staff.

Mayor Furlong stated a workshop should be scheduled with the department heads to better understand their department needs. In regards to council/mayor salaries, a recommendation of a increasing the stipend a small percentage each year to close the gap and come closer to other cities with like population as North St. Paul.

Interim City Manager Frandle stated that discussions had been discussed prior with the hiring of the new City Manager, and a possible additional position of an Assistant City Manager which would also add another salary to the budget. Recommended moving part-time clerical staff in Community Development to full time, seeing the need is there for that staffing.

Mr. Winek continued the meeting reviewing the 2022 debt plan. Stating that after the collection of property taxes in December we will be able to pay off the GO Bldg Refunding 2012A bond off a year early. Project costs and funding were discussed and broke down by locations. Adopting of the plan will be brought to the next council meeting for approval. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was reviewed and has items for vehicle and equipment, building and facility improvements, capital technology, pavement preservation, ponds, natural resources and environment, parks, playgrounds, paths and open space, streets & utility reconstruction, and utility infrastructure preservation.

The maximum budget levies will need to be certified at the September 21, 2021 city council meeting, will also be bringing forth approval for refunding bonds, authority for the city engineer to develop work plans for projects and to set a date for the Truth In Taxation date, which will be proposed for Tuesday, December 7th.

A workshop will be scheduled with department heads on Tuesday, September 14th at 5:00 p.m.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion by Council Member Thorsen, seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), Mayor Furlong adjourned the workshop meeting at 6:33 p.m.

/s/ Terrence J. Furlong, Mayor

Attest: /s/ Brian Frandle, Interim City Manager/Clerk